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SUBJECT: MFA Summons UN SRSG Pronk

¶1. On February 20, the Government of National Unity (GNU) summoned Jan Pronk, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in Sudan, to register a protest regarding UN statements that the GNU believes are biased and exceed the UN mandate. The GNU complained about his recent presentation to the UN Security Council on Darfur, which the government interpreted as unfair condemnation that did not place enough blame on the rebels. The government also criticized SRSG Pronk's statements on CPA implementation, the Merowe Dam, and oil wealth sharing, which they characterized as uninformed and inappropriate.

¶2. In a press conference on February 21, SRSG Pronk responded to the criticism. He said he is always impartial, citing accusations of partiality from both the government and the movements as proof of his neutrality. He has always remained within his mandate to help implement the CPA. He is occasionally accused of going beyond that mandate, he said, because many people poorly understand the CPA. Addressing the protest on the Merowe Dam, SRSG Pronk said that a group calling itself the "Group of Victims of the Merowe Dam" asked for a meeting with the UN. This group then met with UN staff members as part of the UN's efforts to interface with civil society.

¶3. The following is a translation of the GNU press release on the meeting, printed as received:

(BEGIN TEXT)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Press release

The Acting Foreign Minister, Mr. Ali Ahmed Karti, summoned today 20.2.2006, Mr. Jan Pronk, the Special Representative of the Secretary General to Sudan. The Minister explained that the summon is intended to protest the manner in which Jan Pronk and UNMIS are handling issues in Sudan and the statements and reports by Jan Pronk and his assistants which impinge upon the sovereignty of the Sudan, its destiny-related issues and its image before the International Community. According to the Minister, this behaviour and manner of handling issues have begun giving the impression to the public opinion that the United Nations has the right to decide Sudan's orientation and will. The Minister said this behaviour is completely unacceptable.

Sudan rejects Jan Pronk becoming "Paul Premier" of Sudan (Note: This is a reference to former Iraq Viceroy Paul Bremer. End Note). If the United Nations and its

Mission want to assist Sudan - the purpose for which they are here and with the consent of the Sudan - Sudan has no objection for positive cooperation. However, if the purpose is to implement another agenda then Sudan has the right to reject this behaviour, proceeding from its sovereign right and freedom to choose its orientation, which is consistent with its national interest.

The Minister has cited a number of instances, which reflect how Mr. Jan Pronk and his Mission did not abide by the agreed manner of cooperation. For instance, Mr. Jan Pronk has been handling issues in a way, which gives the impression that the Mission can exceed the government to decide how any issue can be resolved, a thing that had impact on the behaviour of citizens and the manner in which they deal with the Government. The Acting Minister referred to the issue of those affected by the construction of Merowe Dam. He said the Government rejects the manner in which UNMIS handles this dossier especially that the Government is concerned with the interests of its citizens and that doors are open for the citizens to cooperate with the state.

In addition, the Minister referred to the manner in which UNMIS talks about the progress of implementation of the CPA, which, he described as negative and amounts to incitement against the state. He said the Mission should have conducted consultations with the Government on aspects of implementation of the agreement and to tackle issues away from the media, which do not convey full facts to the recipients.

The Acting Minister also referred to Mr. Pronk's statements before the Security Council on the situation on Darfur, and the AU-UN transition. He pointed out that

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such statements were intended to reflect that the Government is to blame for deterioration of the security situation in Darfur and to give the impression that the Government is not willing to tackle the situation in Darfur. Mr. Pronk's statement on AU-UN transition suggests that this step might be taken without consultation or consent of the Government. The Acting Minister explained that this understanding is unacceptable for the Government and that no body can impose such option on the Sudan. He added that it was the hostile circles which motivated the AU to adopt such option, and that demanding the Government to improve the situation in Darfur without asking the same from the other party - the rebel movements - is a matter which runs counter to justice and logic.

The Acting Minister criticized Mr. Pronk's raising of the issue of oil and development in the South before the UN Security Council last January in a way, which suggests that the Government is deliberately hiding facts and is denying the Southern people their rights to oil revenues. According to the Minister, this is incorrect. The Minister pointed out that the Government of the South is the one responsible for deciding how the money is spent. Mr. Pronk should have contacted directly the competent authority in the State (the Ministry of Finance) to get first hand information instead of raising the issue in public without evidence.

The Acting Minister also criticized Mr. Pronk's statements on the need to replace the Ceasefire Agreement in Darfur with another agreement. He pointed out that the parties to the conflict are still discussing solutions for Darfur conflict in Abuja and that giving such statements impede efforts to achieve solution and that his statement is premature as the parties are still conducting talks to achieve solution with their own consent and conviction.

The Acting Foreign Minister also explained that the rebel movements are the main obstacle in the way of implementing the cease-fire agreement. Adding that it is not fair to put all the blame on the government regarding the security situation in Darfur, and this is what should have been reflected in the reports submitted by Mr. Pronk to the UN Security Council on a regular basis.

The Acting Foreign concluded by explaining to Mr. Pronk that the Sudan is ready to cooperate with UNMIS so long as it is honest in its dealings. However, if it is proven otherwise, Sudan has right to take whatever arrangements based on its national sovereignty.

In response to the remarks and criticisms of the Acting Foreign Minister, Mr. Pronk explained that he is carrying out his duties and is considering himself a friend of the Sudan and he is always neutral in his assessment. He also explained that given his experience on political issues, he is always keen to be accurate in his statements, which are sometimes misquoted. He also explained that his statement about the possible transition from AU to the UN was based on the agreement, in principle, of AU Peace and Security Council. At this point, the Acting Foreign Minister explained to him that the international powers, which has vested interest, are pushing the AU in that direction.

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed to continue the dialogue between the two parties towards more coordination and understanding so as to be able to address all issues in a responsible and constructive manner.

(End Text)  
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